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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [VE](#)  
SUBJECT: CHAVEZ OBSCURES MIAMI VERDICT, FOREIGN MINISTER  
DENOUNCES IT

11. (SBU) President Hugo Chavez took over the airwaves in an obligatory national "cadena" broadcast on November 3, squashing early news reports of Franklin Duran's guilt in the Miami "suitcase" trial. Venezuelan law requires free-to-air broadcasters to carry presidential "cadena" broadcasts in their entirety, and Chavez has used this tool frequently to stump for his United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) candidates and to vilify the opposition. However, yesterday's speech was a mundane recitation of the benefits of socialism, evils of capitalism and the models of new socialist men and women. By the time Chavez had finished his three-hour "lesson" to a group of San Cristobal students, most of the TV audience had probably tuned out and local news cycles that would have covered the verdict were thrown off kilter.

12. (SBU) Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro held a November 4 press conference in which he called the convicted Venezuelans "political kidnap victims" of the United States and dismissed the case as "a fabrication of the FBI and USG on behalf of Bush." Maduro claimed that the GBRV had requested the extradition of "that criminal" Antonini and the other Venezuelans to face trial for "betraying the homeland and giving false testimony." Note: Post has received no GBRV extradition requests for Antonini or other Venezuelans to appear. End Note.  
CAULFIELD